

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

MISSIONS IN MEXICO.

UNDER THE CARE OF THE

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY

REV. M. WOOLSEY STRYKER.

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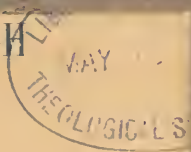
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WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE  
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Stryker, Melancthon Woolsey,  
1851-1929.

Historical sketch of the  
missions in Mexico under

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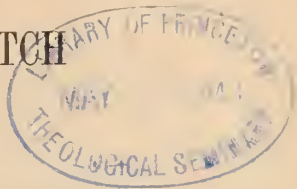
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#### BOOKS AND ARTICLES OF REFERENCE.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Article in the British Encyclopedia.                 | Haven's "Our Next Door Neighbor."   |
| Article in Johnson's Encyclopedia.                   | "Our Sister Republic." A. S. Evans. |
| Article in <i>The Century Magazine</i> , Nov., 1881. | "Twenty Years among the Mexican     |
| Pasco's "Indian Tribes of Mexico."                   | Rankin. \$1.25.                     |
| Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico."                     |                                     |

The reader who would trace the sway of the Latin Church in Mexico is referred to and compact article (pp. 453-456) in *The Foreign Missionary* for April, 1880, the re-em of which is forbidden by the limits of this paper.

The secular press contains frequent columns and paragraphs relating to Mexico, high to those who read with a missionary instinct.

# MISSIONS IN MEXICO.

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## THE COUNTRY.

MEXICO is at our doors. Her geography makes her evangelization our nearest and immediate duty. Our very safety as a Christian state (for we must help her or she will hinder us) dictates such a gospel application of the "Monroe doctrine" that her great uplands, sure to be the highway of a railway system, may be the viaduct of pure religion in its southward progress, and complete the circuit between the two divisions of a continent that is yet to be wholly our Lord's! The Cordilleras must link the Andes to the Sierras in a chain of salvation that shall witness His supreme conquest whose "righteousness is like the great mountains."

Mexico rests its pyramidal base upon our frontier along 1800 miles, being the southern boundary of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Its extreme length is 2000 miles, and its breadth 1100 miles. Its area is 761,000 square miles, which would contain France four times, New England eleven times, New York sixteen times. It is as wonderful in its variety of configuration and climate as in its resources and products. The land is traversed by great mountain ranges, part of that tremendous axis of the continent which threads five zones. These great vertebræ, with their spurs, overlook vast and fertile plateaus lying, at the lowest, some 3000 feet above the sea. A day's journey can include a range of temperature and product equivalent to that comprehended by the latitude between Cuba and Vermont. The climate is as mellow and lovely as Italy's, the thermometer having a range through the year of little more than fifty degrees. As a landscape is focalized in a Claude Lorraine glass, so in Mexico all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them are blended. The flora is magnificent and immensely varied. The botanical riches surpass those of any other land on earth.

Mexico is an agricultural cosmos. Coffee, one of the chief exports, in quality and price can under-bid the plantations of Java and Brazil. The manufacture of sugar is of immense proportions; the cane grows uncultivated to the height of twenty feet. It is an excellent cotton land. Havana is glad to put its brands upon Mexican tobacco. Rice, indigo, cocoa, caoutchouc, dye-stuffs, and

all tropical products flourish in the lowlands; while upon the uplands, and within a hundred miles, corn and wheat can rival Illinois and Minnesota. Strawberries, melons, peaches, with all the generous fruits of hot climates, are prolific; and these with all the vegetables known to American kitchens, and many more too perishable for commerce, are the plentiful and cheap staple of diet.

Of course where mountain ranges can culminate in a superb peak 17,000 feet high, there is a great extent of sterile and untillable land; but the fertile valleys and upper plains yield each year two bountiful crops. All the animals of the tropics and of the temperate zone are here, the northern portions of the country furnishing great facilities for herds and flocks. The western coast has pearl fisheries, and Yucatan yields amber. Timbers of great value are to be an increasing revenue of the future.

The underground wealth of this favored land is past estimate. Nearly one-half the precious metal in man's possession has been dug here. Gold is as abundant as in Colorado and California,

"To make, to ruin, to curse, to bless,"

as lust shall serve or use master it. The silver is illimitable and forms the chief mintage. There is copper enough to bring down the market price one-half. Platinum, lead, tin, zinc, antimony, nickel, and cinnabar, are variously abundant.

No blast furnace has yet been built in Mexico, but there are mountains of iron, and provinces with the ore atop the earth by the millions tons. Coal is constantly discovering, the arsenal of a possible manufacture that could furnish with material the skilled labor of the planet. What will Mexico not be when forge and mill shall supersede petty industries and mere hand-labor? The quarries of Mexico, yet undug, are of certain importance. Her mineral wonders are so far but specimens of what enterprise shall find and furnish. The laboratories of nature are still producing sulphur and the chemicals of the arts.

As yet, only the crudest labor, the most primitive implements, the least ingenuity, have approached these varied and gigantic treasures; skill, sagacity, scientific mechanics, all backed by capital, must soon unlock these coffers of the ages. The mere resources of this romantic land are by no means the foremost warrant for the Church to act, and act now. "There is no difference;" human sin, shame, sorrow, and eternal jeopardy, and Christ's sufficiency for these, are our motives. But, nevertheless, this vast potential wealth and this dawning future are the basis of an argument for immediate advance. When this nation, second upon the continent only to our own in populousness and wealth, is wakening to power, let us see that she wakens to righteousness. Her future must ally



with ours. With a coast line of 6000 miles, Mexico has no commercial rivers, and scarcely one decent harbor. The tides of her traffic must flow to the ports of the United States, nearer or remoter. We must be her first and chief market. Already the sagacity of our capital is peering thither. We are to build the railways and furnish the facilities for export that must quicken production and give it ample outlet. Notwithstanding the cost of engineering, by reason of the obstinate irregularity of the land, the prize constantly bids higher. By withes of iron, by the links of common interest, by the steady onset of social forces, Mexico's future is to be more and more identified with our own. For once, then, let the children of light be wise in their generation,—of their mammon make eternal friends,—enter an alliance under the true cross,—outrun even the shrewdness of investors,—and in the simplicity of Christ carry the irresistible plea over the borders. If engineering can span chasms that seemed a fixed barrier, and chisel all impediments to the level of its purpose, shall the pioneers of the gospel, with all its guarantees of civilization, domestic purity, and personal dignity before God, be less ardent, resolute, and successful? While financiers turn to Mexico to bring it to the market, let us outsee even their sagacity, and outdo their zeal, and bring Mexico to that which is “without price.”

“Ye valleys, rise, and sink, ye hills,  
Prepare the Lord His way!”

The Mexicans are fully awakening to the importance of continuous communication with the United States; let us waken them to “approve the things that are more excellent.”

#### THE PEOPLE.

The population numbers about ten millions. There are eighteen cities having upwards of 20,000 people. Only about one million hold property of any kind. About one million are of clear European blood; five millions of pure Indian descent; and the remainder are a mixed race, with all the variously blended traits, good and bad, of a conglomerate ancestry.

The direct natives have a lineage of centuries. The Toltecs came in from the north about 1000 years ago. The Aztecs, in the thirteenth century, made conquest of all their predecessors, subordinating into one domain the tribes from the Gulf to the Pacific. Many, however, of those subdued tribes still retain their separate identity, and their peculiarities of dialect and custom, notably in Michoacan and Yucatan. The aborigines of Mexico were vigorous and warlike; and their descendants, while showing no diminution in numbers (of late years they have increased more

than the Creoles and Spaniards), still maintain many of their early traits. They constitute (strangely to our notions of the Indian) the agricultural element of the country, and, considering the latitude, are industrious and thrifty, not lacking in virile qualities, though touchingly subdued in mien and tone by the long years of subjugation. The Aztecs, as the Normans in England, and more recently the Tartar dynasty in China, took on the civilization they overran.

Dr. Ellinwood has happily compared them to the Venetians, in their strongholds rescued from the waters, and gradually fortified until they became not only invincible but supreme. Their refuge upon Lake Tezeuco had become, at the Spanish inroad, a city of 300,000 inhabitants. Their history is romantic and wonderful. They attained a high cultivation. They had a noble architecture, and were skillful in arts; they made advances in poetry and astronomy; were ingenious, æsthetic, ornate in decoration, chivalric to their women. They had much that reminds now of Egypt and now of France. The syllables of their ancient language are still their living tongue. The City of Mexico contains not a few noble and influential men, whose hearts beat with the unadulterated blood of an ancestry as old as Charlemagne. The chief lady of honor to "poor Carlotta" was a lincal descendant of Montezuma. Such vital pertinacity, and through such a history, reveals integral characteristics which, sanctified under the final and all-blessing conquest of the Galilean, may yet resume all their ancient dignity.

(The New Testament has been printed in the original Aztec.

→ The Aztec religion was as prolific in gods as that of Greece or Rome. They held one supreme ruler, like the ancient Jove, and a whole pantheon of deified human impulses and passions. Temples were numerous, and the hierarchy many and strong. Cannibalism was a religious rite. In the Museum of the City of Mexico there may be seen to-day a gigantic circular block of red porphyry which once was the apex of the pyramidal temple that towered in high view above all the homes of the capital. It was the great sacrificial stone of the bloodiest rite on earth. It is estimated that annually 20,000 war-prisoners were slain upon it. Its side is horrible with the sculpture of cruelties. Polluted by the dripping hearts of myriad victims, this Moloch altar testifies the inherent impotence, even of noble qualities and an otherwise high civilization, to redeem an unguided people, their sin-blurred instincts unhelped, from the inhumanity of a humanity ignorant of God's mercy, and learning its only lessons from the clash of matter and force.

Ah, what a Macedonian cry, from such a land, sounds into the drowsy ears of a lukewarm Church to come and help, that, purged of its past, a redeemed national life may bear the glory of the relig-



ion of Jesus Christ!—that no Romish compromise between this butcher-block and the undefiled gospel may, with priestcraft, and empty rite, and red hands, hinder the free course of eternal love!—that all mere ritual may yield to righteousness, and Mexico, in the power of Immanuel, become a happy people whose God is the Lord!

It is not to be thought that labor among the Indians or native Mexicans will find everything ready. Upon all their original qualities they bear the hoof-marks of conquest and long abuse. Their clan feeling has been intensified by ages of hateful serfhood; their native brightness, simplicity, and accessibility scorched and withered under long repression and abuse. The policy of their papal conquerors has been evermore to keep them down and under. Ignorance has been their degradation, and to-day but one-eighth of the population of Mexico can read. The Bible is unheeded, for it is almost entirely unknown. A dissolute, carousing, gambling, drunken priesthood have been their only preceptors. The convents have been nests of licentious idlers—their god their belly. Under the extortionate demands of the padres, marriage has been widely superseded by concubinage. The name of Jesus has become identified with Jesuitry, and the gospel has been galled. The moral reaction of all this has been terrible, indeed, upon the master race; but while the Spaniard has relapsed into universal indifference—practical atheism—the Indian's soul has fed on grudges. Resentment has not been less deep because impotent. The prejudices of power, crushing its victims under a rigid caste spirit, have but compacted their heredity of estrangement. Such work does Rome when unmolested! She transmuted much, but regenerated nothing.

The "hacienda" system of peonage has been another factor of tyranny, parcel to the whole spirit of the usurpers of this land. It is feudality with none of its merits. The proprietors of vast sections rule their helpless tenants under a remorseless despotism—ejecting upon caprice, oppressing everywhere. The laborer is practically a slave without recourse—and worse than a slave; for mere base interest leads slavers to care somewhat for their chattels. This blighting system is chiefly responsible for the shifts of desperate and famined wretches, for brigandage, outrage, and wide contempt for a rule that has no mercy, and a law that is without justice. Under such cumulative and traditional wrongs, the common people at large, and of all shades of race, are bitterly poor, and universally demoralized. No wonder that Mexico, with a society so constituted—the few pampered and debilitated, the many impoverished—can show so little in manufacture and commerce, and literature and the arts. Her imports (though, to be sure, under a tariff almost

restrictive) are only about thirty millions annually, as (for comparative instance) against an average of six hundred millions in the United States. All this, Saxon justice and a Christian civilization must change—invigorating, encouraging, uplifting. Mexico must be “born again,” and nursed at the breast of freedom.

While, with ourselves, sturdy Englishmen, and keen Frenchmen, and, notably, thrifty Germans, are turning toward these boundless and undeveloped resources, and bringing with them a leaven of new commercial vigor, the people must be changed at deeper springs. Already the shafts of dawn are piercing the superstitions of the past, and the sword of the Word is spilling the soul of tyranny. The gospel, ardent, bold, aggressive, the only true and abiding philanthropy, must unhinge the gates of hell and bear them away to the very crest of Orizaba. For “everything shall live whithersoever the rivers shall come”!

Spite of all perversions and repressions the human conscience is ever the prepared soil of the gospel seed; and the Indian communities of Mexico show already not only a surprising teachableness, but a profound zeal to hear the Word of life, eagerly receiving the preached and printed message, and often at great self-sacrifices.

#### THE POLITICAL HISTORY.

The Spaniard, Hernando Cortez, conquered Mexico 1519–21. For 300 years viceroys ruled—not for Mexico, but for Spain. Cruel governors vied in extortion with greedy bishops. The Popish Church gradually impoverished the land with mortgages that covered fully a third of all the real property. The vicarage of cupidity and lust ate as a cancer. The greedy tyranny crushed all the germs alike of religious and civil liberty. The truth that makes free, the magna charta of all manhood, the high code of personal obedience and duty, was a thing sealed and lost. But this rule of baptized robbers could not last forever, nor bar out with the abuses of the dark ages the “Light of the world.”

When Napoleon broke the sceptre of Castile, in 1808, Mexico began to breathe—yet stertorously, as one rescued from drowning. Miguel Hidalgo, albeit a priest, a noble patriot, struck the first real blow for liberty in 1810. He struck stoutly, but was overcome, tried, and shot. What of that! The undying fire was lighted at last. The seed, wet with such blood, sprang up everywhere. In the years from 1821 to 1828 the whole chain of her American dependencies flung off the yoke of Spain. Mexico, under Iturbide, declared herself free in 1821, and began the republic in 1824. Mediævalism was not, however, to be uprooted in a day. “Since the first declaration of independence there have been at least sixty revolutions. These have been attributed to the ambition of mili-

tary leaders, to restlessness among the people, to a love of plunder, and to a lack of appreciation of the majesty of law and good order; but the truth is, says one who knows the Mexican well, and who has lived a long time in the country, 'These frequent wars are but outbreaks of unceasing struggle between sacerdotalism and the desire for liberal institutions.' With some of these insurrections the priests have had much to do, as by them they hoped to regain their lost power and influence, and enjoy the property which had been wrested from them. Other revolutions have been occasioned by disappointed political or military leaders, who have been willing to sacrifice the good of others to their own personal ambition; but the real cause is the lack of true religious principle, in rulers and people, which principle gives fixedness to government and law."

Not all at once can a people, long brutalized, attain self-government in liberty under law. The bloody oscillations of this history, like that of France, lay part of their horrors at the guilty door of those who had so wrought evil.

✓ The Jesuit mildew still gathered foul and thick upon the efforts toward constitutionalism. "In all the Spanish states it has taken half a century to learn that republicanism and Romanism are from their very nature in universal and eternal conflict; that the one encourages the enlightenment and free thought of the people, and cannot exist otherwise; while the other must live by authority and repression."

The story of Santa Anna; his *coup d'état*; the revolt of Texas; the Mexico-American war; the saving to freedom our present southwest out of the bony clutch of "Giant Pope;" the ultimate comprehension of California;—all these are threads interwoven with the providence of God toward ourselves,—a chapter written in His undeniable hand. Our thoughts were not without evil, but they were not God's thoughts. He "meant it for good, to bring it to pass to save much people."

If not altogether clear of guilty greed and an unnamed purpose, the bayonets of the United States poured over the borders to the bloody work of Buena Vista and Monterey; nevertheless, there went in many an American knapsack A BOOK, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations! In the awful furrows of war was sowed, here and there, the Word of life; the Word that "brings light;" that tells of peace to man and glory to the Highest, and that "the garments of the warrior and the boots of battle shall be fuel of fire"!

✓ The enslavement of Romanism was renounced in 1857 under Juárez; but for ten years yet it elung to the throat of Mexico. Not until 1867 was the liberal republic finally triumphant over the priestly reactionaries.

The events in which discord yielded to the more stable government of the present are the things of but yesterday. Another Bonaparte was again to be the unintentional minister of Him who restrains all men to His final purpose, and turns their wrath to a doxology.

The appeal of Miramon and the ecclesiastics to Louis Napoleon; the French usurpation of 1862; the imposition as emperor of Maximilian (more sinned against than sinning, and worthy, alas! of a better end); when our hour had come, the stern remonstrance of Seward to the French empire; the withdrawal of their arms; the desperate appeal and piteous madness of the beautiful Carlotta,—all these are written in the memory of this generation.

“These Buonapartes, we know their bees,  
That wade in honey red to the knees!”

He sleeps who wrought this folly, whose life was treachery, glitter, and fiasco. No marplot heir of that fated line shall rise to lay rash hand again, in the name of “destiny,” upon the web of God. France and Mexico are free, and Toussaint l’Ouverture is avenged at last in Juarez.

Let us listen for a moment to Dr. Ellinwood: “The republic, which for ten years had existed almost in the person of a single man—Benito Juarez—had returned from its exile at El Paso to San Luis Potosi, and it became apparent that the final conflict would centre at Queretaro, half way between the latter place and the capital.

“Pardon a single glance at this remarkable man Juarez. A pure-blooded Indian, born in the mountains of Oaxaca, he had risen to power by his acknowledged genius. When Comonfort betrayed the republic to the reactionists in 1857, Juarez maintained the liberal cause till the next election, when he was chosen president. During all the years of the struggle with France this man, with a cabinet composed of Lerdo, Iglesias, and Marshal, and with Señor Romero as his minister at Washington, kept alive the cause of liberty among the people. Even when they were driven to El Paso on the northern border they still held their organization as president and cabinet of the republic, and sending letters through the United States to friends in all lands, they assured them that their republican cause was not dead, but would certainly triumph.

“Their sublime faith and devotion doubtless had great influence in shaping our policy at Washington and in creating a reactionary sentiment against the empire even in Europe.

“The spring of 1867 brought the beginning of the end. Maximilian’s chief forces, with himself among them, were at Queretaro under siege. In an attempt to escape he was betrayed by one of

his generals, placed under arrest, tried by a military tribunal, and, with Generals Miramon and Mexia, was sentenced and shot.

"In the trying scenes which followed, the character of our typical Indian president was well illustrated. Efforts were made by our government and by the European consuls to secure a change of sentence; and when the wife of a prince belonging to Maximilian's staff threw herself at the president's feet and clung to his knees as she poured out her entreaties, he wept in sympathy while he declared himself powerless as a mere executive under the behests of the law.

"It is a strange spectacle, a European princess at the feet of an Indian patriot pleading for the life of an emperor, and both weeping as the solemn fiat is uttered. And this is the man—this American Indian—this is the man who for ten years of hard struggles had carried a republic in his head and heart, and who both before and after that solemn hour did more than any other to restore order to his distracted country. When, in a public reception, a captured French tri-color was spread for him to walk upon, he stepped aside. 'No,' he said, 'the French are not our enemies, it is only their emperor. The French are our friends, and, depend upon it, that flag will yet wave over a republic.' A prophecy which Juarez lived to see fulfilled."

Juarez, this master spirit, died in 1872, and was succeeded in the presidency by Lerdo de Tejada.

Mexico is a republic comprising 27 states, besides Lower California and the federal district. The capital has a population of about 250,000. Her political system is chiefly borrowed from our own, and is nearly its counterpart. The president is elected for four years. The senate has 56 members chosen for six years. The house of deputies 331 members whose term is two years. The chief justice, elected for six years, is vice-president *ex-officio*. Each state has its local constitution, with elective governor and legislature. The army comprises 21,136 men. The navy is nominal, and has only four insignificant gunboats. There are not 300 miles of railway, and staging is the public conveyance. There are about 7000 miles of telegraph, as compared with about 110,000 in the United States. Mexico contains 12 inhabitants to the square mile, as against 14 in the United States. The relative areas of the two countries are as one to five.

As democrats, we should have a generous sympathy in Mexico's progress toward a government "of, by, and for the people," hailing their enlightenment and release from all that menaces their advance.

As Christians, we should seek that "the Son shall make them



free indeed." Let Mexico keep her own eagle, but exchange the cactus for the olive.

As patriots, it behooves us to recognize that, in any future struggle that may come for material liberty, and in the struggles that must come for the truth, we must be strengthened by their moral alliance, or hindered by their spiritual alienation. "By liberal things shall we stand." "The commonwealth of man," if it ever be, can be only in the triumph of deep righteousness; and if this hemisphere of republics is to share and lead in that, it must be by the emancipation of the individual conscience, and the disenthralment of the masses from the unreason and worldly outwardness which is ever the chief fulcrum of apostasy.

The new moral earnestness in Mexico is a strong reason to hope that stability will replace the old chaos. By state decree, on the 25th of September, 1873, the Church and State were separated and congress precluded from passing any laws to prohibit or to establish any religion; marriage was made a civil contract; slavery was abolished; the aggrandizements of the monastic orders were nationalized in behalf of public education; the property of religious establishments was limited by law as to its acquisition and amount. Public instruction received a mighty impulse, and is still rapidly advancing.

"According to the government report of 1875, there were then in Mexico the following primary schools:—Sustained by the federal government, 603; under the care and support of municipalities, 5240; supported by associations or individuals, 378; under the care of the Roman clergy, 117; private schools of various kinds, 1581; those without classification, 184. Total, 8103. In comparison with the population, Mexico has one school for each 1110 of the inhabitants, which is a better proportion than is shown by Austria, Brazil, Chili, Greece, Portugal, or the Argentine Republic. The number of children reported as actually receiving instruction in the above named schools is 1,632,436. Measures have been proposed for the formation of normal schools in each of the states, for the training of teachers. There are several so-called colleges in the republic, though very few have reached a high grade."

All this the Roman bishops have met with proscriptive anathemas and with incitements to violence; but so much the more has the cause gone forward. If the ecclesiasties are venomous, the authorities are determined.

The profound reaction and resentment toward Romanism is the key-note of the present hour; but in the flux and transition *all* religion is menaced by an oscillation toward the baldest negativism. Superstition has so "overbuilt" the foundations as to be apparently identical with them; the poisonous ivy has loosened the walls of



the Church. What is really Christian has been so misrepresented as to make men suspicious. So does hypocrisy ever disgust from the very truth it caricatures. So did France, for its bitter associations, attempt to wipe out all vestige of Christianity. So did Japan, early in the seventeenth century, rise to extirpate the last remnant of what, as Jesuits had taught it, was not strangely called "*Jashiu mon*"—"the corrupt sect." (See *The Mikado's Empire*, chap. xxv.)

Secularism, the danger of this age, must be boldly faced, for if the tyranny of hierarchs is exchanged only for the self-rule of infidelity, the last state of Mexico will be worse than the first, and anarchy will return. Superstition is no worse enemy to man than modern nescience and material epicureanism; both can persecute or seduce; and so, on right hand and left hand the onset of the forces of damnation must be met. The Christian panoply, sword, helmet, breastplate, shield, sandals, must be furnished the converted people. Peace must be a garden, not a desert; and so, soon and wide, the seeds of truth, "whose life is in themselves," must be sowed in the wake of God's plowing. We must conquer by replacing. With tender, eager, sedulous care, while we denounce Rome's sorcery, we must lift up those whom her bewitchments, in their flight, have left upon the ground.

This rule must not yield to unrule nor self-rule, but to the sovereignty of Christ. *Jehovah-nissi, Jehovah-tsudkenu, Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-shalom*—these must be the new watchwords of Mexico's regeneration. In the words of one of her recent martyrs—"LET JESUS REIGN!"

The nascent and infant Church must be established in such truth as that of 1 Peter iii. 13-18. Thus is set open a great effectual door, and (as always) there are many adversaries. Communism is afloat, insidious—deadly. Spiritism is doing its subterranean work. Mormonism is even now crawling thitherward to weave its caterpillar nests. The advance must be toilsome, and according to our faithfulness, oh, fellow Christians! One Carmel is not all; Jezebel is still alive; and unless we take lessons from the God of Elijah, our sudden gain will have bitter reaction. Not in straight lines, but in spirals, returning continually upon themselves while really moving on and upward, does the kingdom come. The new impetus is not yet victory, but only opportunity. The acceptable time demands also an accepting Church. The eloquent occasion speaks in vain if it speaks to sleepy ears.

Our ranks are armed and furnished, and down the line thunders the Leader's word—"charge!" but unless we obey orders we are undone and defeated, and other forces must carry the heights! Brave men for brave occasions: a narcotized and stupid army, even

though the cross be its banner, shall be smitten with blindness, apoplexy, and many sorrows! "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

#### EVANGELICAL PROGRESS.

It remains to summarize the work already undertaken toward fully offering to Mexico that mercy of God in Christ which is for all people.

(a) Since John Calvin sent his mission to the Brazils, since Coligny fostered the Huguenot colonization in Florida, the Presbyterian branch of the Church of Christ has been in the van of mission enterprise, with means and men.

The Bible, as we have seen, found its way into Mexico with our armies in 1847, and the seed sown even upon the floods of strife have been found now after these many years.

Be it remembered that the first actual work was done by that apostolic woman, Miss Meliuda Rankin. Her simple story, *Twenty Years in Mexico*, is a prominent chapter in that Providence which so wonderfully chooses the weak things (as this world reckons) to confound the things that are mighty. This single-handed heroine, strong in faith, was the pioneer of the unalloyed simplicity of Christ. Her story should be carefully read.\* Miss Rankin's first approaches were made in 1854, in the border town of Brownsville, Texas. There she secured a seminary which was maintained until the era of our civil war. The revolution of 1857, proclaiming religious liberty, opened Mexico to Protestant laborers. In 1860, Mr. Thompson, the first agent of the American Bible Society, began work at Matamoras. Thither Miss Rankin crossed in 1864, and in 1865, by her own plea and presence, raised, in the United States, \$1500 to forward her work through native colporteurs, whom she herself trained and sent out.

Her work at Monterey began in 1866, and was the means to direct the Rev. H. C. Riley (of whom presently) toward this field in 1869, and of hastening the sympathies and efforts of our own Church. In 1872 our General Assembly took action, and on September 23d of that year our first band sailed from New York—the Rev. Messrs. Pitkin, Thomson, Phillips, and Hutchinsou, with their wives and Miss Ellen P. Allen. They went directly to the capital. There they found a large body of believers, of anti-prelatical convictions, embracing some nine congregations, who at once accepted their

\* The writer of this would most earnestly urge that every church should own a living and growing collection of missionary books, accessible to the congregation, the sure seed of an increasing intelligence and zeal in the fast-reviving devotion to the missionary commandments of our Lord.

guidance; and definite Protestant form was given to what had been so far miscellaneous. Organization began. Method and coherency were established. Regular church life was instituted, with ordinances administered scripturally, and the sacraments restricted to such as made personal confession.

In a belt across the land, from Vera Cruz to Acapulco, at least thirty congregations have now connection with our work, the City of Mexico being a centre. The education of a native ministry was at once undertaken. A popular hymn-book was prepared, which has since been adopted by many of the other branches of the Church in Mexico. Schools for girls and young men were organized. Unwelcome controversy was, from the first, forced upon our missionaries. They had to defend the full and free gospel against Romish accensations; against free thinkers, so called (see 2 Peter ii. 17-19); against gross "spiritism" (carnalism, rather); and, alas! against schismatic exclusiveness. They made themselves respected, however, both in their ability and their Christian temper, and now have assured a position where they can toil with less diversion to the unwelcome task (see Neh. vi. 1-3) of withstanding sacramentarians.

MEXICO CITY, MONTEREY, SAN LUIS POTOSI, and ZACATECAS are the chief stations under our Board, each of them a centre of wide work. The full details concerning these stations and their related churches are beyond the limits of these pages, and may be found in the pamphlets published by our Board of Foreign Missions.

Mobs and martyrdom have made painful the story of many of the outposts of our own and other denominations; but, as far as possible, the protection of the government has always been afforded.

Our oldest and strongest church is at *Cos*. It maintains a vigorous and augmenting life, under the care of a well-trying layman, Sr. Amador. It has 200 members; a church school of 130 Bible students; a boys' day-school with 60 pupils, and a girls' school with 45. It has a chapel which cost \$2000; and from a printing press, furnished by friends in Philadelphia, is issued weekly a bright religious newspaper.

*Fresnillo, Tampico, Toluca, Metepec, Capulhuac* (find them on the map), are all names of hope to our laborers—landmarks in the geography of the Church yet to be.

In no field of our own work have *visible* results been so rapid and so large as in Mexico. We have here, to-day, more communicants than in any other of our ten great fields—5031. We have also 23 native preachers (11 of them ordained and 12 of them licentiates) and 13 native woman laborers.

The Rev. J. Milton Greene, leaving the pastorate of an attached people in New Brighton, of the Brooklyn Presbytery, sailed on the

1st of September, 1881, as the latest addition to our force. It is intended to form a Presbytery of Mexico at no distant day.

The roots are striking down and out. Churches, even in deep poverty, are struggling toward self help, and are mutually aiding one another. Modest houses of worship are building. Bible associations for common study multiply apace. The law and order of our polity (so closely knit to the genius of representative government, being, indeed, the mother of it) is gradually leavening into the natives an appreciation of deliberative counsel. Disreputable priests are forced into a more decent semblance of duty. Their frantic tirades are losing their power to stir the baser sort to outrage, and in very self-defence they are forced to pay less attention to bull-fights and more to the saint calendar. We may trust that many of them, in the new sun-burst, will turn from dead works to serve the living God, throw off the spotted garments, make missals of their missals, and rejoice in Him who alone holds the keys of death and hell. The day of decision dawns upon them all.

Messrs. Polhemus and Thomson have written intensely suggestive letters in the *Foreign Missionary* of August and October, giving the mingled items of hope and difficulty. The latter upon a recent trip baptized thirty-three adults. These children of a day are yet babes. By temper and habit the people are migratory and uncertain. The climate tends toward an idle temper. Even in religion they demand *siestas*. Faith without works and enthusiasm without consistency are the tendency of this volatile and impulsive race.

But what else could we look for? Must not any mighty work come by process? What odds are against brave fidelity *everywhere!* There are bright lights of exception on every hand. Stability is confirming. Eagerness is settling into bone and sinew of character. "All things are possible with God." Family prayer is becoming the nursery (in that oldest church of God, *the home*) of a better generation. Isolated companies of believers are integrating in zeal and knowledge, and making ready to exchange milk for meat. Busy in wide preaching tours upon donkey-back,—giving constant hand-to-hand instruction by wayside and threshold,—talking far into the night to ready groups,—our missionaries are sowing the seed broadcast by all waters, "sowing for time and eternity;" but oh, praying how fervently for "more laborers." At least thirty men are needed fully to reinforce our present stations.

"How great their work, how vast their charge!  
Do Thou their anxious souls enlarge;  
To them Thy sacred truth reveal,  
Suppress their fear, inflame their zeal."

"Particular attention should be given to the subject of schools for girls. It is in this department that our mission work in

Mexico is most deficient. We have a good corps of native preachers, and other young men are in training for the work of preaching and teaching. We are establishing little Protestant communities in various parts of the republic, amid surroundings which are not only ecclesiastically but socially hostile to the truth. Woman everywhere represents the stronger element in the religious faith of the community, whether that faith be true or false. If our preachers and teachers are to marry Roman Catholic wives, they will be shorn of half their influence. If our Protestant families are to hand their daughters over to be trained in Roman Catholic schools, they will thus surrender the very key to the social life of the churches, and in the end lose the ground that has been gained.

"We cannot accomplish a sound and permanent work of evangelization in Mexico without giving due attention to higher female education. We must prepare not only wives for our educated men, but female teachers for our village day-schools. We should establish a female seminary in the capital, with a day department for those who reside in the city, and a boarding department for the daughters of our own people who live elsewhere. The latter should be restricted perhaps to those who give the best promise, and all should be called upon to contribute as they are able to their self-support."

We have at present a day-school of sixty girls under the care of Miss Latimer. Miss F. C. Snow is now on her way to Mexico, and as soon as practicable a boarding-school, under the care of these ladies, will be established in the commodious building lately purchased by the Board of Foreign Missions, to be paid for by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Philadelphia.

This must be but a beginning of a deep and wide interest throughout our entire Church, to give to Mexico a noble womanhood. It cannot fail, it must not falter.

(b) Next to our own work, the movement now closely identified with the Episcopal Church in the United States has at present an important claim upon our attention.

The Rev. Henry C. Riley, a man skilled in Spanish, and then the minister to a Spanish congregation in New York, was sent out by the American and Foreign Christian Union in 1869. He was able, by his special training, to throw himself at once into the work. He found a band of men and women fully alienated from Rome, yet of strong Episcopalian proclivities. They were at that time as sheep having no shepherd; the remnant of an important company that had been gathered in the capital in 1865, and ministered to by Francisco Aguilar, a devout and biblical Christian, formerly a Roman ecclesiastic. Though dying after three years of intense



labor, he had begun what craft and envy could not undo. This group warmly welcomed Mr. Riley, and he, with all he had, threw himself into their cause. With ringing words, from press and pulpit, he set himself to the task, beset as it was with menaces to his very life, and with the bitterest opposition of a spirit determined to crush him out. But presently a Dominican friar, Mauuel Aguas, of high honor and of rare gifts, who had been selected as a champion to refute the work of Mr. Riley, was led, in his very study to annihilate the iuchoate life of the little church, to investigate, *see*, and "submit to the righteousness of God." Like a new Saul he began to preach boldly the faith he once would destroy, and, with the great strides of a regenerate spirit, stepped to the very front of usefulness.

With great power he gave witness of the truth in Jesus. He shook iniquity to its roots. He challenged Rome's idolatries, and with piercingly intelligent thrusts combated them. But like a surcharge of electricity that in its passage consumes the wire that carries it, so the zeal of God ate up this fearless advocate, and he died of intense toil in 1872. Mr. Riley became the diocesan in 1869. This work has gone on—not without perils. More than forty martyrdoms have attended its advance—bloodshed incited by Romish priests, and heralded by the brutal belfries of their churches! This work is now in close confraternity with the Episcopal Church of the United States, and under their large assistance. From the first it has had peculiar material advantages. When Juarez, in 1860, closed the Romish establishments as "nuclei of sedition," and public scandals, the immense property confiscated to public uses included many splendid churches. That which the great vampire had sucked from the nation's veins was not to be despoiled, but guarded as in trust for the real improvement of the people. Three of the noble old cathedrals have, at nominal prices, been granted to this branch of the Church. The capital is thus the centre of their activity. With three strong congregations there, and some forty in adjacent regions, they have in all 6000 communicants. There are two theological schools training young men for their ministry, one in Mexico, one in Cuernavaca; and eight schools for the young, three of them in the capital.

With the valuable results won under these Episcopal fosterings, all Christians must have hearty sympathy; but at the same time we must frankly and firmly protest that their assumption of exclusive domain is a hindrance to the common cause and a denial of Christian liberty. To institute *polity* above the Bible as a basis of fellow labor, to rebuke *any* who in Christ's name are casting out devils,—this, whoever practices it, is *schism*, and no presumptuous claims, certainly not the vaunted



sortes of an exclusive episcopacy, can evade the stigma of "strife-gendering." They are the "sectaries" and the "dissenters" who divide, who exclude, who reject, who make human traditions a *sine qua non*. "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." This for every one! Let each, loyal to his own methods, honor all who labor for God in this white and wide field. They are the "successors of the apostles" who imitate their labors—they only. Not Esek nor Sitnah, but Rehoboth, is the well of salvation. The essential unity of the body of Christ consists in mutual honor and care, part for part,—so "we shall be fruitful in the land." "*The Church of Jesus in Mexico*" is a Church, not *the* Church. Any other claim is insult to Him who said what is written in Mark iii. 35. There is room for holy emulation in this great and open realm of opportunity, but none for envy. Time is too short, Christ too near, the labor too solemn, to quarrel over petty shibboleths, to divide the common camp upon mere regimental jealousies and prides! "Have we not all one Lord?" "LET JESUS REIGN" is flag enough; *that* let us fight under, and shoulder to shoulder. But, lamentable as it must be, they who would spy out our liberty must bear the charge of schism, for that is the erecting conditions of Christian fellowship over and above the conditions of salvation. "PEACE BE TO ALL THEM THAT LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN SINCERITY. Amen."

(c) The Methodist Episcopal Church has also made rapid progress. The northern branch of this Church has a well-distributed and well-organized force. They report 8 missionaries ordained and 5 woman workers, 17 native preachers, 735 communicants, and about 700 Sabbath-school scholars. They have acquired valuable church and school properties, to the amount of \$110,000—a most important equipment. The Methodist Episcopal Church South has two zealous and fruitful missions in Mexico: (1) The central station, having its centre in the capital. This station reports 14 missionaries, 34 native preachers, 22 native teachers, 55 out-stations, 34 Sabbath-schools, 740 scholars, 710 communicants, and 1 theological training-school. They issue from their own press a monthly religious paper, with a circulation of 1800 copies. They report an eager demand on the part of the Mexicans for religious reading of all kinds—tracts, papers, books, Bibles. (2) The border mission of this Church in the region of the Rio Grande reports 13 out-stations, 24 schools, 502 scholars, 650 communicants. During 1881 this work has made a net gain of 25 per cent. in all directions. One hundred and forty-seven adults have this year been baptized.

(d) The American Board of Foreign Missions had a missionary, Mr. Stevens, with his wife, at Almalulco. He received much atten-

tion, and was much encouraged, when, March 2, 1874, a brutal mob, under the direct instigation of the *cura*, broke into his home, and, having plundered it, killed him and one of his converts, with shocking mutilation. The American Board has a few other missionaries—all in western Mexico, “in the midst of wolves,” facing constantly the bitterest spite, and menaced with those atrocities for which Rome offers plenary indulgence.

(e) The Presbyterian Church South has at Matamoras three churches, 10 stations, 3 missionaries, 2 native preachers, 2 teachers, and, though limited, is doing an effective and permanent work.

(f) Matamoras is also the centre of a quiet but constantly-outreaching work under the Society of Friends.

As the result of what has been done in Mexico during the past nine years, there are now at least thirteen thousand Protestant communicants in regular churches; and this can only be a partial measure of the influences that have been set afoot. That such work could be done at all is much, and that it could be done with a force relatively so inadequate is much more; and both thoughts plead powerfully with God's Church to meet more than half way this nation that is to-day stretching out her hands. These plastic years are the receptive and fashioning ones; the iron is on the anvil. It is the hour of free access to the people. They are reading everything from Voltaire to Renan. Skepticism is becoming the rage, and is a most curious medley of fifteenth and nineteenth-century errors: we must carry in the immutable words of the Saviour! The Mexican Sunday is a day of gala and folly, of noise and traffic: we must carry there the hallowed Lord's day! In this fetal and fashioning hour not only something must be done, but everything! Mr. H. C. Thomson writes May 10, 1881, from Monterey, that “few fields give better promise of permanently good results from timely labor.” Now is the time—the time to pour in forces to a new Mexican war, but not now against Mexico, but for her; not with carnal weapons, but with those which are “mighty through God.” Now is the hour for us to tell our neighbors the secret of the great things God has done for us, that, desiring to copy our prosperity, they may appreciate its foundation in the wealth of Him in whom, richer than all silver and gold of Mexico's mines, are “hid all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God.” The guarantees of a noble future to Mexico lie only in the sovereignty of Christ. Oh, let us hear the call and heed the claims of God for that country, and in live earnestness seize the hour! Let us send squadrons where hitherto we have sent scouts. Wanted, recruits for the army of Christ Jesus! “WHO WILL GO FOR US?”

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